



Visitors of the Sooke Fine Art Show admire an art piece. (Photo by Jack Most/Sooke News Mirror)

EDITORIAL: Sooke Fine Art Show about much more than art

KEVIN LAIRD / Aug. 20, 2018 10:30 a.m. / [OPINION](#)

The Sooke Fine Arts Show has evolved into something considerably more significant than an annual showcase for local artists. Since its inception, the event has grown into an something that draws thousands of visitors a year to our community. That has created a ripple effect that benefits local businesses and draws people from far and wide to attractions that highlight

what makes Sooke so unique. Arguably considered the premier juried art show on Vancouver Island, this year's version featured the work of 274 adult and 78 youth artists, with a total of 496 items submitted. Attendance exceeded the high water mark set last year, with close to 9,000 visitors passing through Sooke Leisure Complex between July 27 and Aug. 8.

An incredibly diverse number of artists and artisans from across the Island and beyond submit their works in the hope of catching the judges' attention. One of the aspects that makes the show so special is the wide range of talent on display, including oil, water and pastel pieces, sculpture in a variety of media, fibre art and photography. There's a long list of artists who attest without hesitation that the exposure they received played a major role in establishing or enhancing their reputation. Their work has found a new home in places thousands of miles away.

The non-profit Sooke Fine Arts Society was formed in 2007 to orchestrate the show, which had grown in popularity from its humble beginnings in 1986 under the guidance of the Sooke Region Museum. A devoted group of volunteers who serve on the board of directors get to work from the time this year's show is dismantled to set the course for a smooth sail to next year's event. They lean heavily on a group of dedicated residents who work at the show and behind the scenes to ensure the event comes together without a hitch.

We believe it's quite an accomplishment for any locale, especially one the size of Sooke, to foster the growth of a cultural event that captures the attention of the region and beyond each summer. Kudos to those who currently serve on the board, those who served before them and the artists, art lovers and volunteers for creating something special that provides a multitude of benefits for the community.